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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

Some years ago the works on Psychology of Religion were written on the basis of introspective accounts by modern Christians of their own religious experience. Such data having manifest limitations, further attempts were made to deal with the subject genetically, the significance of religion being found in its beginnings. So we have a number of works from the standpoint of anthropology using the data of the most recent investigations among the less civilized peoples. Stratton¹ has attempted a different approach from either of these in his recent volume in the Muirhead Library of Philosophy. He discusses some of the more significant features of religion as they have appeared anywhere among men without much concern about the historical process. It is enough that they are manifestations of the religious spirit and so help toward an understanding of what religion really is. He makes use of the more primitive religions as they are presented in the older works of Tylor and Frazer, lays particularly under contribution the canonical writings of the great religions of the world, ancient and modern, and includes the historical manifestations of those religions in individual thought and conduct.

As soon as one studies religion in this broad way the most divergent results are, of course, attained. A significant principle is found, which seems of the essence of the religious attitude, but straightway in some other religion its opposite appears. Some feeling seems to be central in religion but elsewhere is the very contrary feeling. Certain modes of action seem very important, but another religion has none of them. A specific thought element seems to belong to the religious consciousness, as, for instance, the idea of God, but some great people reject it altogether. Stratton considers this contradiction the most characteristic fact in religion, and the very means by which we may best understand those attitudes of men which have come to have that collective name. He devotes three out of the four parts of his book to an elaborate presentation of these conflicts, dividing them conveniently into those of Feeling, Conduct, and Thought. This discussion is in the main descriptive and is carried out with excellent discrimination.

The main interest for the student of the psychology of religion is in the constructive work of the brief fourth part of this book. What is the essence of the religion that has appeared in such contradictory

¹ *Psychology of the Religious Life*. By George Malcolm Stratton. New York: Macmillan, 1911. ix+376 pages. \$2.75 net.

manifestations? Stratton finds it in the Idealizing Act. Man as an idealizing being has cravings and appreciations which "include sensuous pleasure and the love of action, together with the curiosity for causes, the need of logical sufficiency, the delight in beauty, the sense of the importance of the family, of larger human unions and the lordship and magistracy which accompany these, and finally of the golden gifts of friendship." Out of these, or some of them, grows his sense of the Best. And religion may be defined as "man's whole bearing toward what seems to him the Best or Greatest—where 'best' is used in a sense neither in nor out of morality, and 'greatest' is confined to no particular region." If this might seem too large for primitive religion, Stratton would say that in primitive man we have not religion proper, but rather attitudes (e.g., animism) from which religion develops. Indeed religion only appears when man has come to some appreciation of "a complementary world of conscious beings." And if here we have the contradiction of non-theistic Buddhism and of philosophical rejection of the idea of divine personality, Stratton would still find in these an "objectless reverence" with all of human character at the back of the rejection.

This foundation of religion in the idealizing act enables Stratton to take issue with the theory that religion is essentially a phase of social consciousness. It derives so largely from the primitive impulses of curiosity, desire to see the cause of change, and interest in change itself, that to identify it definitely with social feeling is only confusing.

Stratton is especially interesting when he drops the rôle of psychologist to take that of advocate and sketches a standard religion. It is practically the resolution of all the antagonisms by conserving the best in each, for "religious motives like muscles work best in opposition." When he carries this to the extent that Triune monotheism preserves the better elements in polytheism one wonders whether he has become a special pleader.

In the final discussion on the search for reality Stratton ably maintains that truth is not to be derived alone from philosophy and science but that religion itself may have a part in the discovery, the fundamental affirmations of the religious consciousness being as valid as those of scientific thought. And he adds, what should always close an essay in the psychology of religion, that we may believe "that something corresponding to our idea of the Best has an interest in the gradual awakening of its own image and desire in men."

It may be said that some religious psychology seems to be discussing antiquated aspects of human consciousness that may once have had an

existence, while this book at least seems to be concerned with experiences which a religious man recognizes as akin to his own.

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BRIEF MENTION

OLD TESTAMENT

GUNKEL, H. *Reden und Aufsätze*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1913. viii+192 pages. M. 4.80.

This is a collection of addresses and articles that have already been seen in various journals, where they were widely scattered and inaccessible to the public as a whole. They were well worth republication in this form. The eleven topics treated are: (1) Bernhard Stade, (2) The Aim and Method of Old Testament Interpretation, (3) The Fundamental Problem of Israelitish Literary History, (4) Samson, (5) Ruth, (6) The Psalms, (7) The Final Hope of the Psalmists, (8) Egyptian Parallels to the Old Testament, (9) Egyptian Songs of Thanksgiving, (10) Jensen's Gilgamesh-Epic, (11) The Odes of Solomon. The range of interest is thus very wide; but there is no unity binding the essays together. The discussions are semi-popular in style and are calculated to make clear to the public at large the attitude of Gunkel toward the interpretation of the Old Testament. The paper on Stade, his teacher, is a discriminating eulogy doing credit alike to teacher and scholar. The second essay states the methodology of the *religionsgeschichtliche* school of which Gunkel is a leader, and the remaining discussions supply illustrations of the methods as they work out.

Die Mischna: Text, Uebersetzung und ausführliche Erklärung. Giessen, Töpelmann, 1913.

WINDFUHR, WALTER. *IV Seder. Nesikin*: 1 Traktat. Baba qamma ("Erste Pforte" des Civilrechts). viii+96 pages. M. 4.80.

MEINHOLD, JOHANNES. *II Seder. Moëd*: 5 Traktat. Joma (Der Versöhnungstag). iv+83 pages. M. 4.30.

ALBRECHT, KARL. *I Seder. Zeraim*: 9 Traktat. Challa (Teighebe). iv+48 pages. M. 2.40.

HOLTZMANN, OSCAR. *V Seder. Qodaschim*: 10 Traktat. Middot (von den Massen des Tempels). viii+112 pages. M. 6.

In Christian circles the chief interest of the Mishna lies in its theological features. Now and then there are tracts which are valuable for cultural purposes, and others which appeal to jurists. The first tract in the series published this year is chiefly of juridical value. The author has followed the methods described in this Journal (January, 1913, pp. 119 ff.), and has employed, as the basis of his work, Goldschmidt's edition of the Babylonian Talmud (1906), the Hamburg MS, No. 165, Lowe's Cambridge text (1883) of the Mishna upon which the Palestinian Talmud rests, and Strack's photolithographic reproduction (1912) of the Munich MS of the Talmud, No. 95. The name of the tract, "Nezikin" ("damages") covers three "gates," this